

## Message Text

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17

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SAJ-01

EB-07 OFA-01 DLOS-04 COME-00 TRSE-00 ACDA-10 IO-11

SAL-01 CG-00 OMB-01 DOTE-00 /105 W

----- 002126

R 251604Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6074

INFO COMICEDFOR

CINCLANT

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 0270

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT ECON EFIS IC

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT TURNS BACK NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION

1. TO SURPRISE OF NO ONE, MOTION OF NO CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT  
WAS DEFEATED YESTERDAY IN ALTHING BY STRAIGHT PARTY-LINE VOTE OF  
41-18. (ONE COALITION MP WAS ABSENT). MOTION, WHICH ITSELF  
STIPULATED NO SPECIFIC GROUNDS FOR LACK OF CONFIDENCE, HAD BEEN  
INTRODUCED JOINTLY BY LEADERS OF ALL THREE OPPOSITION PARTIES.

2. VOTE FOLLOWED PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE PREVIOUS NIGHT WHICH HAD  
BEEN BROADCAST ON STATE RADIO. PEOPLES ALLIANCE MP'S MAINLY  
ATTACKED GOVERNMENT FOR ALLEGED WEAKNESS AND IRRESOLUTENESS IN  
ECONOMIC MATTERS AND IN FISHERIES DISPUTE. PA SPOKESMEN CITED  
DETERIORATING ECONOMIC SITUATION, ESPECIALLY DROP IN PURCHASING  
POWER THAT HAD FORCED UNIONS TO STRIKE IN ORDER TO SEEK REDRESS.

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SIMILARILY, IT WAS CHARGED, COALITION'S FISHERIES POLICY WAS ONE

OF DISCORD AND HESITANCY AS EVIDENCED BY DELAY IN BREAKING  
REWATIONS WITH UK. ORGANIZATION OF LIBERALS AND LEFTISTS AND SDP  
JOINED PA IN CRITICIZING ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE BUT WERE LESS  
OUTSPOKEN ON FISHERIES MATTER. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEADERS PUT MOST  
STRESS ON WHAT THEY SAW AS MORAL DECLINE IN COUNTRY WITH CLEAR -- IF  
INEXPLICIT -- REFERENCE TO COVER-UP CHARGES LODGED PREVIOUSLY  
AGAINSZ JUSTICE MINISTER OLAFUR JOHANNESSON (REYKJAVIK 154).

3. PRIMEMIN HALLGRIMSSON, SPEAKING FOR COALITION, CRITICIZED  
OPPOSITION FOR IRRESPONSIBILITY IN SEEKING TO DEMONSTRATE LACK  
OF CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT AT TIMESOF SERIOUS PROBLEMS BOTH  
INTERNALY AND EXTERNALY. HE DEFENDED COALITION'S ECONOMIC RECORD,  
NOTING PROGRESS IN REDUCING INFLATION RATE AND BALANCE OF TRADE  
DEFICIT. ON FISHERIES ISSUE, PRIMEMIN REJECTED PEOPLES ALLIANCE  
DEMANDS FOR FURTHER TOUGH MEASURES SUCH AS WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO,  
NOTING THAT DEFENSE INTERESTS ALONE SHOULD DETERMINE NATO PARTICI-  
PATION AND THAT PA WANTED TO GET ICELAND OUT OF NATO UNDER ANY  
CIRCUMSTANCES. HALLGRIMSSON ADDED THAT GOI POLICY IN FISHERIES  
MATTER WOULD NOW REVOLVE AROUND DEVELOPING SUPPORT FOR ICELAND'S  
CAUSE IN SUCH FORUMS AS NATO AND UN; WORKING TO SAFEGUARD COUNTRY'S  
INTERESTS AT UPCOMING LOS CONFERENCE; AND STRENGTHENING COAST  
GUARD IN ORDER TO HINDER BRITISH FISHING. BEYOND THESE STEPS,  
HALLGRIMSSON SAID, GOI WOULD MAINLY AWAIT RESULTS FROM LOS  
CONFERENCE.

4. COMMERCE AND JUSTICE MINISTER JOHANNESSON AND FONMIN AGUSTSSON  
(PROGRESSIVE PARTY CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN RESPECTIVELY) ALSO  
SPOKE FOR GOVERNMENT. AGUSTSSON STRESSED FISHERIES MATTER, WHICH HE  
SAID GOVERNMENT HAD HANDLED WITH FORESIGHT AND FIRMNESS, CITING  
DIPLOMATIC BREAK AS EVIDENCE TO WORLD OF SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH  
ICELAND VIEWED MATTER. JOHANNESSON FOCUSED ON ECONOMIC QUESTION,  
DEFENDING GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE UNDER DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES.  
MARTIN

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